

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1477/02

by Herman Vermeer (ELDR), Maria Sanders-ten Holte (ELDR) and Jan Mulder (ELDR)
to the Commission

Subject: Report by the Netherlands Central Planning Bureau on the effectiveness of the European Union's cohesion policy

Has the Commission received a copy of a study drawn up by the Netherlands Central Planning Bureau (CPB) which demonstrates a lack of effectiveness in the way in which the EU's cohesion policy is being implemented? A large proportion of the subsidies benefits the comparatively wealthy regions which do not need the money. It is claimed that a policy change would help toward the attainment of an annual economic growth rate of 0.5% in the poorest regions. The report also refers to the need for policy reform in connection with the accession of new Member States.

What measures and initiatives does the Commission have in mind with a view to improving the general effectiveness of the cohesion policy? If the Commission has decided not to take any measures, can it justify its decision?

Is the Commission aware of the recommendations set out in the CPB report with a view to improving the policy's effectiveness, i.e. either increasing Commission control over the funds or allowing the Member States themselves to determine the projects to which they allocate the funds?

Does the Commission intend to follow the CPB's recommendations? Can it indicate which of the two recommendations it favours? If it does not select the first option, does that mean that the Commission believes that it has adequate control over the cohesion policy?